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2-1-2009

### Awards; 2009-02-01; Black History Month Proclamation

Catherine Collins

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# State of New York

## Executive Chamber

### Proclamation

**Whereas**, each February, communities across this state and nation join to celebrate Black History Month and this year marks the 84<sup>th</sup> such annual observance, providing New Yorkers with an opportunity to pay tribute to the African American community and the richness of Black culture that has helped shape our country; and

**Whereas**, this year's theme, "Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas," examines our progress from a society that originally was based on racial segregation, the denial of human, social and economic rights and opportunities to persons of color, multiple forms of discrimination, and the non-assurance of fundamental civil liberties, to one that has embraced change after decades of struggle and perseverance in achieving equal rights for people of all races; and

**Whereas**, this observance also provides an opportunity to highlight the issue of race and citizenship in U.S. history and in all the Americas – from the hardships experienced by Black slaves, to their longstanding fight for freedom, to the realized aspirations of current leaders, such as President Barack Obama, the first African American in history to be elected to the highest office in our Nation; and

**Whereas**, today, the legacy of the Black community is significant and filled with accounts of other heroic individuals – Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. DuBois, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Paul Robeson and the immortal Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – as these and other Black leaders have left a permanent mark upon our civilization; and

**Whereas**, further adding to the greatness of this nation, the Black community remains a source of pride and interest for all New Yorkers and we applaud Black institutions that advance this heritage by serving as forces of progress and change for new generations, and we value the strength and dedication of community-minded Black Americans who provide an example for others through their efforts; and

**Whereas**, the history of Black Americans is an enduring foundation upon which the community stands and an inspiration to Americans of all backgrounds, and it serves as a steadfast reminder of the principles that we share as a society and, moreover, a proud example of the spirit of Black America; and

**Whereas**, I am honored and proud to be the first African American to serve as the Governor of the great State of New York and I furthermore applaud the dedication of many who work on behalf of the entire Black community as they proudly celebrate this monthlong observance recognizing our community's hard fought struggle for freedom and equality that enable us to make ongoing contributions to life in our State and Nation today and for future generations;

**Now, Therefore**, I, David A. Paterson, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim February 2009 as

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in the Empire State.



**Given** under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State  
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-first  
day of January in the year two thousand nine.

*David A. Paterson*  
Governor

*W. J. Cunningham III*  
Secretary to the Governor